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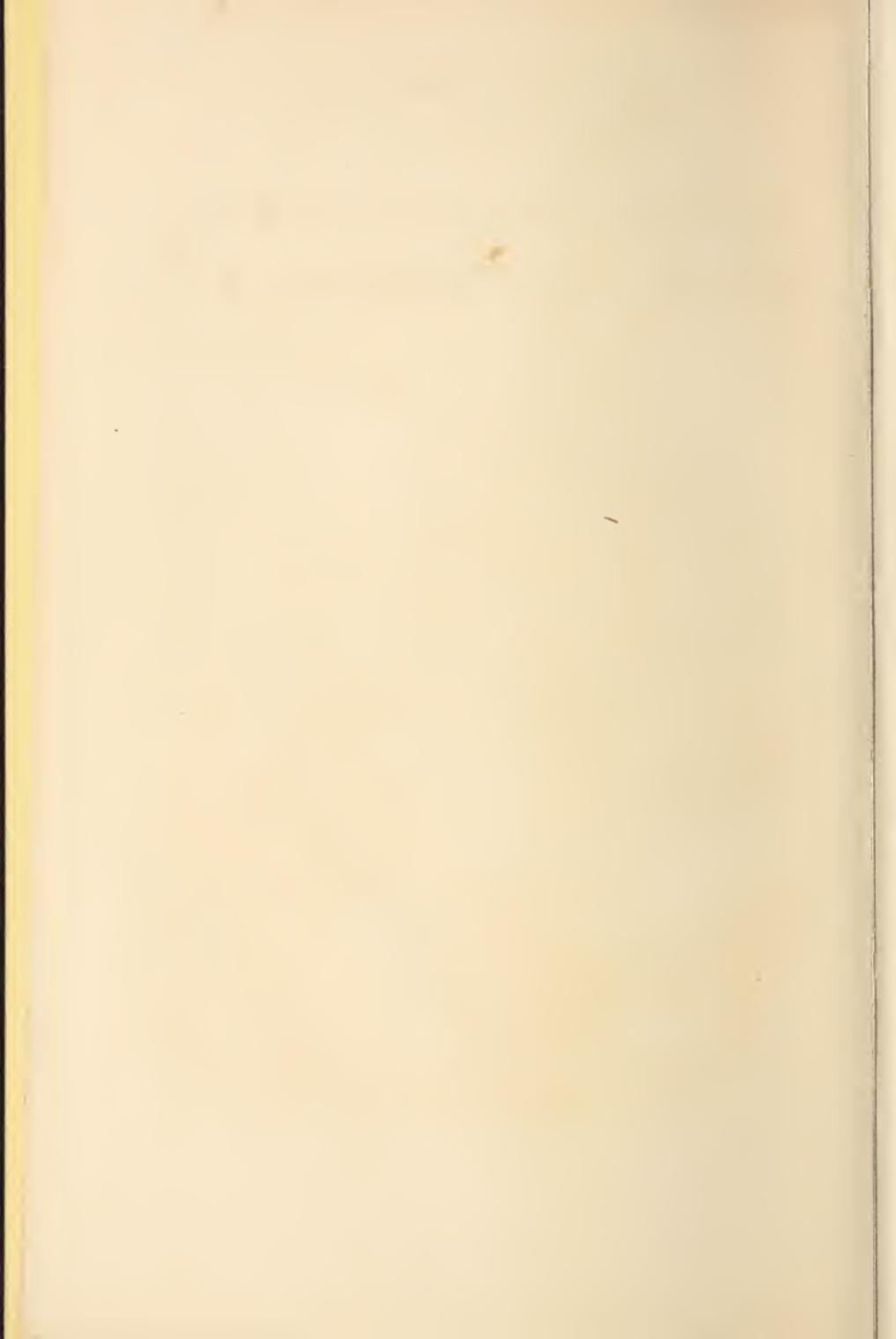
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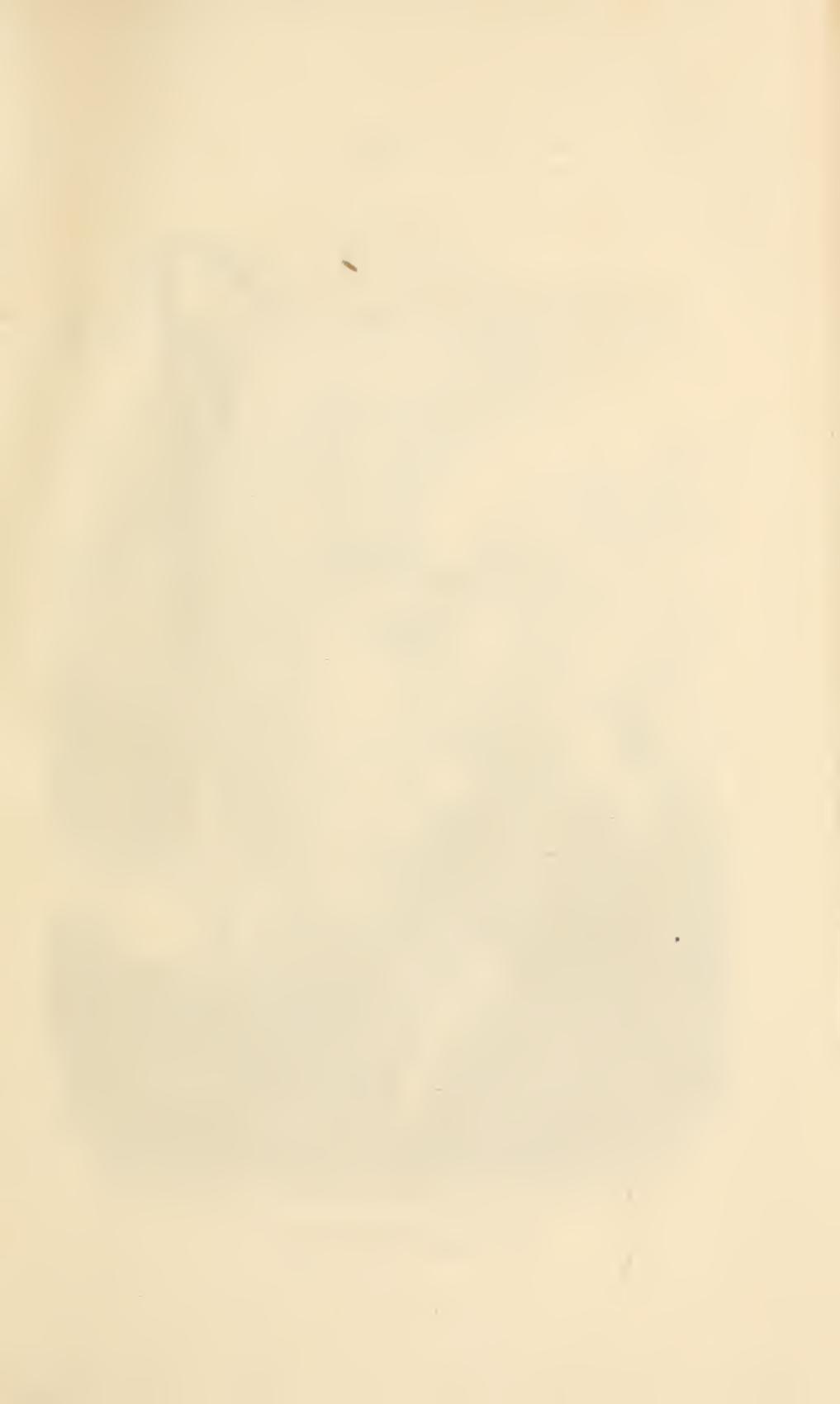
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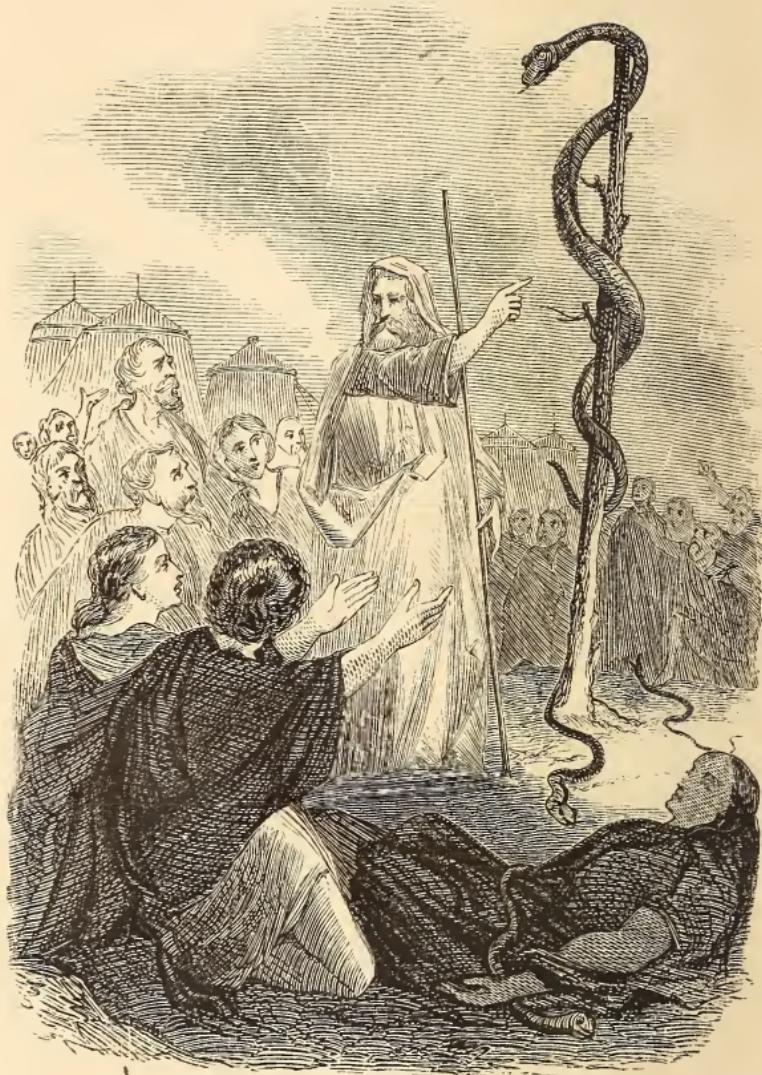
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THE SERPENT OF BRASS.

THE  
BRAZEN SERPENT,

OR

FAITH IN CHRIST ILLUSTRATED.

By JOSEPH H. JONES, D.D.



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# THE BRAZEN SERPENT.

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## CHAPTER I.

WE read in the twenty-first chapter of the book of Numbers, that when the Israelites had been bitten by fiery serpents, Moses made of brass an image of this serpent and put it on a pole, and then whoever looked to this brazen or dead serpent was cured of the bite of the living one. There is something very astonishing here. In the history of diseases and remedies there is nothing like it, and had it not been explained to us by him who

appointed it, we should be just as much perplexed to understand it as the Jews are. They cannot imagine why Moses should have been instructed to cure his dying brethren by such a simple thing, which, if it affected them at all, would be presumed to make them worse. The very last object at which a man, mortally wounded by a poisonous serpent, would wish to look, or from which he would expect relief, would be an image of the creature that had bitten him. To explain this wonder, and help us to see the use of it to us as well as to them, I will first recount what Moses did to heal his suffering brethren, and then tell you why God directed him to do it, in this particular way.

Most of my young readers, I presume, are familiar with the remarkable history of the children of Israel in Egypt; of the way in which they were brought out of it; and of their wandering forty years in the wilderness. If those of you who understand geography, will take some good map of this region which has the way the people travelled marked out upon it, you will see that, although they travelled probably more than a thousand miles up and down in this desert country, yet the distance in a straight line is less than three hundred. They were now come to Mount Hor, and had they been permitted to go forward in a direct course, their way would have been short. But to this the king of Edom would not consent,

as they would have gone across his territory. This was very provoking, because it compelled them to travel back the very way they had come several days, and through a country that was extremely rough and dreary. It is not at all surprising that the people should have been greatly vexed with this most perverse and disobliging king, who had given them so much needless trouble; but it was not to be helped. He had a right to forbid them, and it was their duty to submit. So they turned about and followed the pillar of cloud and fire; but with such an angry and rebellious temper, that they murmured not against Moses only, but against God. "Wherefore," said they, "have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in

this wilderness?" It was this ungrateful, outrageous spirit which was punished by these fiery serpents. Why they were called *fiery* serpents we do not know. Some think it was because of their bright red appearance which made them look like fire; others because the bite of their fangs caused an agony like that produced by fire.

Different writers give us very marvellous accounts of the various kinds of serpents found in Africa. There is one species of a yellow colour, probably resembling the brazen serpent made by Moses. Another serpent found there is about nine inches long, whose bite is incurable. An ancient Greek historian mentions a kind existing in these parts called *hydri*, that

had wings like a bat with which they flew out of Arabia into Egypt, where the bird *ibis* killed them, for which reason this bird was held in great veneration by the Egyptians. This is supposed to be the “fiery flying serpent” mentioned by the prophet Isaiah xiv. 29; and perhaps it is the one described by Moses. Persons who have crossed this desert within a few years, say that there are still scorpions and venomous serpents here in great abundance. Hence it is thought that God did not now create these fiery serpents, but turned upon the Israelites those already existing there; just as he uses floods, fire, hurricanes, cholera, and plague to punish the wicked when their sins call for such special judgments. The

panic caused by these deadly creatures was dreadful. How many were destroyed by them we do not know, but in every instance the bite was mortal. Nothing which they could do was sufficient to save them. The poison infused by the sharp tooth of the reptile soon got into the blood, was diffused over the whole body, and the poor sufferer died in the most dreadful agony. And what could they do? It was vain to try to fly or hide from these serpents, and as nothing that man could propose would bring relief, they are forced to look up to God. Humbling as it was to their pride to come to Moses whom they had so lately reproached and insulted, yet there was no other source of hope. Their punishment had brought

them to reflection and repentance ; with the most submissive spirit, therefore, they came confessing their sins, and entreated him to “ pray unto the Lord that he would take away the serpents from them.” Their conduct had greatly grieved Moses, but did not make him angry, much less revengeful, and without delay he asked God to pardon their sin and deliver them from the judgment. The Lord heard the prayer and gave them relief, but he sent it in a most remarkable manner. Had he seen fit he could just as easily have turned the serpents from the Israelites, as he had turned them to them. Surely, he who made the creature and gave it power to crawl, fly, or bite, could direct its movements without any other means than his own

willing it. But instead of commanding these serpents to depart, as he governs the winds, the waves, and the lightnings, he chose to let them remain among the people, but provided a remedy which might render their bite harmless.

As I have said, he told Moses to make of brass a serpent resembling in appearance the one that was so fearful, and "to set it upon a pole," and it would come to pass that every one who should be bitten, would be immediately cured by looking at that brazen image. Now, my dear children, in all your reading, have you ever met with a story more truly astonishing than this. Dr. Doddridge says, that "Job the celebrated African assured him that when in his native country,

he once saw a live cow carried away in the mouth of a serpent;" and in the Repository of the Royal Society at London there is preserved a serpent about twenty-three feet long. Some of you, perhaps, have read of the great serpent that attacked the army of Regulus, the first invader of Africa from Rome. This monster was so large and powerful that for a while it set the whole Roman forces at defiance. The account is, that it seized with its mouth and devoured many of the soldiers, and killed more by the blows of its tail. This, you know, was a great while before they used guns or cannons in war, and gunpowder was not invented till near three thousand years afterwards. As their arrows would not penetrate its

skin they resorted to their *balistæ*, or instruments for throwing huge stones, by which it was crushed. But after it was killed the whole vicinity was so infected by the evil odour of its enormous carcass, that they were compelled to remove their camp to another place. This is a wonderful story, and is, no doubt, exaggerated, but the account of these loathsome creatures mentioned by Moses, and of their attacking the camp of Israel in this fearful manner is far more wonderful, and yet true.

But even this is nothing to excite admiration compared with the way of being cured of their bite. Why did God not give Moses power to heal them by a word, as he did the prophets and apostles who performed cures after-

wards? Or why did he not direct him to means that would seem more natural and reasonable; such as the use of some medicinal herb that might be found in the vicinity of the camp? or mention some drug—some plaster or poultice, perhaps? God has appointed these and other means in all ages and places by the employment of physicians, who are only the Lord's instruments. Why did he depart from his usual course in this case, and especially in so astonishing a manner as to cure them by only looking to an image of the serpent raised on a pole? A question that not all the philosophers of the world could answer, had not the Saviour told us that it was done on purpose to be a picture of the way in which the wicked are saved

from sin. If you turn to the fourteenth and fifteenth verses of the third chapter of John, you will find this very explanation: "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." About fourteen hundred and fifty years after the lifting up of this serpent in the wilderness, there appeared in Judea an extraordinary person, who was known among other titles, by that of "the Son of man." This appellation is used with reference to him nearly one hundred times in the Scriptures, and is meant to show that though his actions proved him to be God, yet he was also a man. This, then, was one of the most remarkable

parts of his character, that he was as really human as he was divine. He ate, drank, was weary and slept like a man, and yet he could open blind eyes, could raise the dead, and had power to create like God. But another distinguishing trait was his perfect freedom from sin. In all his life, of more than thirty years, he never did anything that was wrong. Yet so much was he hated by the Jews, that he had not been with them as a teacher more than three years, (some say only two,) when he was violently seized, hurried into court for trial, and though Judas who betrayed him, Pilate who judged, and one of the thieves that suffered with him, all declared him innocent, yet he was condemned to be crucified. Now it is worthy of being

noticed here, that they selected this particular mode of punishment. The Jews used to hang their criminals by the neck, or stone them to death, burn them alive, throw them from a rock to be dashed in pieces, or into the sea with a weight around their neck. Some they beheaded, as seventy of Ahab's family or descendants were slain by Jehu's orders, and their heads sent to him in baskets. Sometimes they were torn to pieces alive, and they had other cruel ways of putting them to death. But though crucifixion was very rare among the Jews, yet this mode was selected in the case of Christ; and why? They preferred it, I suppose, because it was not only the most painful of all the modes of taking away life, but was likewise the

most shameful. Jesus Christ was so desperately hated by this people, that they sought to gratify their wicked hearts, by doing every thing in their power to inflict disgrace as well as pain. But there was a providential and more important reason lying back of this. Had Christ been put to death in any other way, it would not have fulfilled this type of the lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness. Moreover, do you not recollect, children, how much better you can understand a truth when you have it pictured before you, or have something that you can see? For this reason, in studying geography, you have maps, on which are represented the cities and countries, the course and relative size of the oceans, seas, rivers, about which

you are to recite. So in astronomy, you have globes and an orrery which exhibit the position and motions of the heavenly bodies. And if it be chemistry, you find it a great help not only to understand, but to enjoy the subject, when you have it illustrated by experiments. Indeed, some of you would hardly believe the wonderful things that chemistry teaches, if you only heard and did not see them. How many of you, for instance, would believe, if a person were to tell you, that the glass of water which you drink is composed of two substances, and that eight parts, by weight, of one, are mixed with one part of the other to form it; and although water is used to extinguish fire, yet one of the things that water is made of is

the great supporter of fire, and there is no combustion without it. These two substances, which are invisible as air, the chemist puts together and burns, and thus forms the water which he will hand you to drink, when, but not before, perhaps, you will believe him. For a similar reason, we have, in the sacraments of the church, water in baptism, to signify our need of the purifying influences of the Holy Spirit; and bread and wine, in the Lord's supper, to remind us of the body and blood of Christ. They are pictures or symbols of these things. For the same purpose, God told Moses to cure the bitten Israelites by lifting up a serpent on a pole, in order to be a picture of Christ's saving you and me by his being lifted on a cross. Ob-

serve that the image raised by Moses was only the likeness of a fiery serpent, and not a serpent in reality ; so it could be a type and picture of Christ who came, not in sinful flesh, but only “ in the likeness of sinful flesh.”

But some of my young readers will say, We do not understand it, after all. We cannot see any resemblance between those poor Hebrews in the wilderness, bitten by the fiery serpents, and ourselves. We have not been bitten, and have no disease in our bodies that should make us afraid, or that gives us any pain. And even if we had, we do not think that we could be cured by looking to Jesus Christ. That is very true, children, in one sense ; and your bright eyes, red cheeks, and healthful looks are

pleasant tokens that you are well and happy. But this is not all of the truth ; you are in health and full of joy and hope now, but it will not be always so. Many of the children who read this little book have buried a beloved parent ; some have lost their mother, some have no father, and others have neither. In a few years, all of you, their children, will be called to follow them ; and what is the cause of this ? Why do not persons live for ever here, without becoming old, wrinkled, and gray-haired, and losing their strength, hearing, and eyesight ? Why have people, in past ages, with but two exceptions, all gone out of the world by dying ? Why do they, soon or late, as certainly die as all the Israelites did who were bitten, before

the lifting up of the serpent? Let us go to the apostle Paul for an answer. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." Here, then, my dear children, you will see that sin has done the same thing for us, that the fiery serpents did for the Hebrews. It has made us all liable to the death of our bodies, and what is infinitely worse, to the everlasting loss of our souls. This is one point of resemblance.

Another, not less obvious and striking, is the way of escape. As the Israelites could do nothing to save their bodies from death, neither can we do anything for the salvation of our souls. If left to ourselves, in spite of all our

works, we shall as certainly lose our souls as the Hebrews would have lost their lives. And in this we notice a second point of resemblance. We are like them in being utterly helpless.

A third is, that as they obtained a cure by looking to the brazen image; so do we receive salvation by looking to Christ. The Saviour does not use the precise words of Moses, and tell us to *look* to him, but he says, Believe. “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up; that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.” We see, then, that the great design of God, in adopting this way of curing the bitten Hebrews, was to *teach us faith in Christ*. Now, a great many people suppose

that this is a subject so obscure and hard to be understood, that it is never worth our while to say anything to children about it. But in this little story from the writings of Moses, as explained by the Saviour, it is made so plain that few, if any, children who are able to read, can fail to comprehend it as well as their parents.

And I would now ask my little readers three simple questions that I think they can nearly all answer, and which will show how far the story is understood. And first, What was there in the condition of the Israelites that made it necessary for Moses to lift the serpent on the pole? You tell me, at once, they were in such a dangerous state that multitudes would have died without it. This is correct;

you have given the true answer ; and this, let me tell you, is the first part of faith in Christ. It is to feel ourselves to be in such a deplorable state, on account of our sins, that we must perish without help.

My next question is, Why did these poor, suffering Israelites look to this brazen image on the pole ? Why did they not apply to their physicians, or try to cure themselves ? You tell me immediately, because they knew that they would die if they did, and that if they were healed at all, it must be done by turning their eyes to this brazen saviour. True, this is the very answer I wished you to give, and this is the second element of faith in Christ. It is a persuasion that if we are saved at all, our help must come

from Christ; that “there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” I think, then, you understood this part as well as you did the other.

My third question is, What were their feelings and thoughts when they first lifted their eyes to the image? They felt persuaded, you answer, that if they looked, they would certainly be relieved, no matter how badly they were bitten, or how desperate their bodily condition. Exactly so, children, and this very feeling makes up the remainder of saving faith. It is a conviction, that if we do rely on Christ to save us, he is able, and willing, and ready to do it, the very moment we believe. This is faith; all about it that any of you need know; it is what

any of you can know; and, let me add, it is what you all must know, or you will as certainly perish as the Israelites would have died, but for looking to the serpent.

Some of you, perhaps, may inquire what became of this brazen image which the people had reason to remember with so much interest? After it had served the special purpose to which it was appointed, it appears to have been laid up in some proper place, and carried with them into the land of Canaan. About seven hundred years afterwards, when idolatry prevailed to so great an extent in the time of Ahaz, it became an object of worship. But during the reformation under the pious Hezekiah, who was the son and successor of Ahaz, it was

broken in pieces, and called by the contemptuous name of *Nehushtan*, or brass bauble. Many princes would have hesitated at the destruction of that which was an interesting memorial of the remarkable transaction with which it was associated. But when it had become a temptation, and a source of evil to the people, the king saw that the well-being of the nation required it. Some modern Jewish writers tell us that it was held in great veneration by their ancestors, not only because it had been an instrument of healing in the wilderness, but because it was made by the hands of Moses. They, moreover, imagined that it might be of some service in a way of mediation with God, and worthy of worship as hav-

ing some degree of divinity. To us nothing seems more revolting than the offering of divine honour to such a loathsome creature; and yet the worshipping of serpents under some form or other was one of the most diffused idolatries of the ancient world. The serpent held a conspicuous place among the idols of Egypt, where not only was its figure displayed in various idolatrous combinations, but the living animal itself was honoured as it is at this day in India. Mr. Drew, of Madras, says, that one day while at dinner he saw a woman with three children sitting near a large ant-hill. He sent a servant to ask what she was doing. She replied that she had come with her children to worship a *cobra di capello*, a large serpent which

had taken possession of the ant-hill. The hillocks raised by the white ants of India are sometimes three feet high, the interior of which is hollow and divided into cells like a honey-comb. When deserted by the ants, serpents often take possession and lodge there. It was a tenant of one of these forsaken hillocks which this deluded female had come to worship, having brought with her milk, cocoanuts, and incense to offer it. "She burned the incense, broke the cocoanuts, and falling down on her knees placed them with the milk before the serpent. Her children at the same time kneeling behind her, paid the same homage to the poisonous reptile."

In the second century of the church

there appeared a sect that received the name of Serpentinians, from their veneration for the serpent that tempted Eve, or, as some say, for that which was lifted on a pole by Moses. It was a part of their service to keep a live serpent in a cage, which at certain times was opened, when at their call the creature crawled out, and twined itself about some loaves of bread, which were afterwards broken and distributed to the company. This was called the Eucharist. Such are some of the superstitions of later times, which are, perhaps, but a repetition of that idolatry which led the devout Hezekiah to destroy a memorial of mercy, which otherwise he would have been happy to preserve. It would seem scarcely possible for any

one not to perceive how exactly parallel to this worship of the brazen serpent has been the superstitious veneration paid to sacred relics in the Romish church, and especially the adoration of the form, wood, and nails of the cross; and Hezekiah's example fully authorizes the total abolition and disuse of every thing of that kind in religious worship.

The only relics under the Old Testament church were the pot of manna, Aaron's rod, and the brazen serpent. The two former were preserved by the appointment of God, but to guard against the abuse of them for superstitious purposes, they were concealed in the Holy of Holies from popular inspection. The other being kept without a divine warrant, became

an occasion of idolatry, until a pious king destroyed it with utter abhorrence.

And now, would it not make the book too long, I should like to mention some reasons for your looking to Christ at once. But this I will leave to your parents and Sabbath-school teachers, whose principal object in their instructions, is to imitate those believing Israelites who went among the sufferers, persuading them to look and be healed. Such also is the office of all who preach to you the gospel. It is to remind you of your dangerous state, by reason of sin, and of your safety in Christ. And now may I not feel assured that each of you can say that he knows the meaning of faith? It is to trust in Christ for

salvation from sin, as the Israelites did in the type for their safety from the bite of the serpent. May I not hope, moreover, that many of you will do it? Yes, beloved children, the morning of your days, when your feelings are so ardent, your hearts so warm and easily affected, is the easiest time, and the best, to believe on Christ. Now your sins are few, compared with what they will be if you are spared to become aged. But perhaps some of you will object, that even if you try to look to Christ, you cannot do it, and it will be useless, therefore, to make the attempt. That is very true, if you make it in your own strength, but not if you have the assistance of God. And does some one feel disposed to inquire, Do you really think

that if I sincerely ask God's help, it will be given?

I will answer his question by asking another. Suppose, that on going to your father, you tell him your desire for some good thing which you know he is able and willing to give, a new garment, perhaps, a book, or anything else, do you think he would decline your request? Can you doubt that he would be more ready to confer the favour, than you are to ask it? But if your parents take so much pleasure in giving "good gifts to their children, how much more," says Christ, "shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

Let us see with what simplicity and beauty your question is answered in the beautiful lines of Newton:

As the serpent raised by Moses  
Healed the burning serpent's bite;  
Jesus thus himself discloses  
To the wounded sinner's sight:  
Hear his gracious invitation,  
“ I have life and peace to give,  
I have wrought out full salvation :  
Sinner, look to me and live.

“ Pore upon your sins no longer,  
Well I know their mighty guilt ;  
But my love than death is stronger,  
I my blood have freely spilt :  
Though your heart has long been hardened,  
Look on me, it soft shall grow :  
Past transgressions shall be pardoned,  
And I'll wash you white as snow.

“ I have seen what you were doing,  
Though you little thought of me,  
You were madly bent on ruin,  
But I said, It shall not be :  
You had been for ever wretched,  
Had not I espoused your part ;  
Now behold my arms outstretched,  
To receive you to my heart.

“ Well may shame, and joy, and wonder  
All your inward passions move ;

I could crush thee with my thunder,  
But I speak to thee in love ;  
See ! your sins are all forgiven,  
I have paid the countless sum ;  
Now my death has opened heaven,  
Thither you shall shortly come."

Dearest Saviour, we adore thee  
For thy precious life and death ;  
Melt each stubborn heart before thee,  
Give us all the eye of faith :  
From the law's condemning sentence  
To thy mercy we appeal,  
Thou alone canst give repentance,  
Thou alone our souls canst heal.

## CHAPTER II.

SUCH, beyond a doubt, dear children, is the meaning and intent of this lifting up of the serpent in the wilderness. It was appointed of God to hold up a picture of great truths about Christ, almost fifteen hundred years before his appearance in the flesh. But in endeavouring to be brief, I have passed over some of them so lightly, that they may not be perceived so clearly, nor be so sensibly felt as their importance demands. If then, you will go with me a few pages further, I will refer to these

matters again, and explain a little more fully the sublime truths which this marvellous transaction among the Israelites was designed to teach. We read that the wounds caused by these serpents were incurable. There might have been something in the tooth of these fiery serpents which made it more malignant than that of other poisonous reptiles. But the wound inflicted by the fang of asps, vipers, and other poisonous reptiles, has proved in all ages, generally fatal. A little delay in applying the remedy, has cost the sufferer his life. But the bitten Hebrew found no relief, for in every instance the victim died, unless delivered in the way disclosed to Moses. The man's state was remediless from any human agency; by

which the Holy Spirit would show us a representation of the desperate condition of man since the fall. To this the Saviour refers in the word *perish*, John iii. 16, which has not been always understood. Thus some persons suppose it to mean that the condition of persons when they are dead is like that of the beasts. That they really perish, soul and body together, and that death is the end of both. That they cease to live hereafter, just like an ox, or a sheep, or a dog. But this is not the Saviour's meaning, for though the body becomes lifeless and is dissolved like that of the brutes, yet its particles are not so scattered and lost, that the person to whom they belonged cannot be raised out of the grave and recognized and judged in

the world to come. It is not surprising that those who want the Bible to teach so, or who do not believe its teachings, should look to their going out of the world with terror. In view of the last struggle, when the soul and body separate, enough is seen to make such an experience frightful.

Most of my young readers have doubtless observed what a dreadful change is made in the body when it dies. Take the case of an infant, and notice how death makes its little eyes glassy and sightless, and hides them under the eyelids. The cheeks lose their roses, and are pale and cold. Its pretty fingers, and arms, and its whole body become stiff, and in a few hours are so much altered, that we put them into a coffin and cover them

deep in the earth. But this is not perishing, although it comes as near to it as anything can be brought, by what is called death. It is true that this precious human deposit will, in a little while, so disappear, that if we open the grave where it was laid, we shall find nothing more of the body than a very small heap of ashes remaining in the box in which it was buried. At length, even this little pile of human dust will be gone, and nothing visible remain of what was buried, any more than if it had never existed. And do you ask me where it has all gone, or what has become of it? The lighter elements of the body can find a way of escape from the coffin, though closed as tightly as was that of Alexander the Great, in

the celebrated city of Egypt, which was named after himself, Alexandria. I do not know that all which learned men have written on this subject is true, nor that you could understand them, if I were to quote what they say, and which is commonly believed. But science tells us, that water makes up two-thirds of the body of man, as well as of the more perfect animals; and of the remaining third, only a very small portion belongs among those substances which are disposed to a solid condition: that animals and vegetables are made of nearly the same materials, only put together in different proportions. This, you will say, is incredible; and yet it is proved by many experiments. To some of these is given the name of gases,

which are particularly described in works of chemistry.

As both animals and plants are all nourished from the earth, so the sulphur, iron, and other substances which are found in the soil, are taken into their systems, become flesh and blood in the one case, and vegetable matter in the other. This will help to explain why it is that the shallow mould, of a few inches in depth, which covers the earth, and out of which all the generations of men, animals, insects, and plants are successively formed, appears, from age to age, to be the same. These animal and vegetable creatures do not perish, but, after their short period of life in an organized form, return to the earth, are dissolved, mingle with it, become a

part of it, and are afterwards made again into new creatures, that live upon the soil, as others did before them. Hence there is quite as much truth as poetry in the lines,

“There’s not a dust that floats on air  
But once was living man.”

It is this constant process of creatures going down into the earth, and coming out of it again, to form other and similar bodies, which prevents any increase of the deposits of decay and death on its surface. Even in the oldest countries on the globe, where two hundred generations of men, and five hundred of domestic animals have lived and died, the mould becomes no thicker; and why? Because the materials of which the buried dead are formed, after being dissolved, changed,

and separated into extremely small particles, rise through the earth that is over them, and help to fill the great storehouse from which its whole surface is renovated. Thus the bodies of men, beasts, reptiles, and insects, the trees, fruits, flowers, and foliage now enjoying life on earth, are, to some extent, of the same composition with that of the generation who lived in the days of Abraham. There is much mystery, we must confess, about this subject of death, and this evaporation of the body afterwards, notwithstanding all that learned men, and, more especially, inspired men, have told us. But it is enough for us to know, that at the time appointed by God, its essential parts will all be gathered together, and will be formed

into a more glorious body than the former, yet retaining all those properties which are necessary to make it the very same. All this is wonderful, and beyond our comprehension ; but not a whit more so, the apostle Paul says, than is the dying, dissolving, and rising of a kernel of wheat. The only reason why we are so little affected by the latter, is because of its being so familiar.

One meaning of the word perish, then, as applied to our bodies, is that they are dissolved, and are invisible for a time. It does not imply that they will never live again, nor that they will never be united again, each to its respective soul.

How this gets out of the body at death, is just as mysterious as how it

ever got into it, or in what part of the body it dwells. Nor do any of us know in what direction it goes at death, in order to find the place of final abode of either the righteous or the wicked. The Bible tells us only that it cannot die, and is not put into the grave with the mortal part, but that it goes somewhere, either to the society of the blessed in heaven, or to the dreadful home “prepared for the devil and his angels.” And it is the wretched state of the latter to which the Bible refers, when it is called, in one place, a dying of the soul, and, in the term which we now explain, its perishing. The reason why this word is used, is that nothing gives us such a striking picture of a lost soul’s condition, as the suffering of the body

when it is enduring its last mortal agonies. Then the eye becomes fixed in its socket, the bosom heaves, the heart labours, and the breath is drawn with increasing difficulty, until it stops with a gasp so frightful, that nothing out of the world of despair strikes the senses with so much horror.

But the word “perish,” signifies not the severity of future suffering only, but its duration, both of which we are now taught, are endless, for they are mentioned in contrast with “everlasting life.” I know that such a truth is dreadful beyond the power of our minds to conceive, and many hesitate ever to mention it, especially to persons so young as you are. The thought of being for ever separated

from the society of the pious and happy, of having our eternal state among the vilest that have ever lived on earth ; to be where that hopeless man was, who saw Abraham and Lazarus from beyond a great and impassable gulf, is enough, as Mr. Baxter says, to turn our brain and drive us to despair, did the Bible reveal to us nothing more ! Then we might well hide it not only from children but from everybody else, as suited to do them no good, and only to begin their torment before the time. But when such painful truth is taught us by the Saviour himself, who, like a tender physician, never causes needless suffering, and informs the patient of his danger only to tell him how to escape, we should not be backward to repeat

it to any. Nor am I afraid that you will be injured by what is taught concerning your danger, if you will give proper attention to an infallible way of escape, which the Saviour himself ascribes to the love of God. “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

## CHAPTER III.

WE read that the old Romans, at a certain period of their history, were living in a state of contented submission to military oppression. On one occasion, one of the bravest and best among them, hinted to a certain philosopher very privately his intention of trying to set them free. The sage remarked that the work would be a glorious one, but that "the people had become too debased to deserve their freedom, or ever to thank anybody who would risk his life to recover it." But this noble-minded patriot so loved

his brethren in their pitiable state that he was willing to do so, nevertheless. This old philosopher spoke the common sentiments of the world about favours shown to the unworthy, as my young readers will all find out before they become as old as their parents now are. They will discover that few persons are ever moved to make sacrifices so much from love to others as from love for themselves. Many will seem to be friendly and willing to help forward your interests just so long as they can make you useful in promoting their own. Others love those who have shown love for them by doing them favours.

But the Saviour was not influenced by any such motives as these. As the brazen serpent was lifted up in

the wilderness for those who were in a state of rebellion at the very time that Moses did it; so the “only begotten Son” of God was moved by love to save those who hated him. We have never read elsewhere, of any who so loved their enemies as to be willing to lay down their own lives to save them, and of very few that would do it for their friends.

There is a story told of two young men, who lived more than two thousand years ago, under the government of Dionysius of Syracuse. One of whom, for no good reason, was condemned to death. Wishing to get the tyrant’s leave to go home and arrange the affairs of his family before his execution, he promised to return and let him take away his life at the

appointed time. The other pledged himself to the king, that, meanwhile, he would go to prison in the place of his friend and suffer in his stead, should he fail to keep his word. In due season, however, he came back as he had agreed, but not to lose his life. The hard heart of Dionysius was so much affected by the exhibition of such love, that he remitted the punishment, and entreated them to receive him to their confidence, and permit him to share in their friendship. It is rarely that we hear of such love as this between friends. But “God commendeth his love towards us,” in that, while we were enemies, Christ died for us; in which both the kind and degree of love so far exceeded not only what men have seen,

or are able to conceive, that the Bible does not attempt to describe it. We are left to imagine what sort of love it was, and how great, from what he was led to do. “God *so* loved the world, that he *gave his only begotten Son.*” And when we read, in another place, of the manner of his death, that he was nailed to a cross, between two thieves, it becomes very plain that we can measure this love of Christ only so far as we can comprehend the dignity of his character, and the greatness of his sufferings. It is a mysterious and awful subject, children, and above the conception of my mind and of yours. But it is enough for us to know, that had the whole race of man perished, what they would have endured for ever would have

been less, in God's sight, than what was borne by Christ, of his own accord, in their behalf.

Some of my readers will ask, perhaps, if this putting of the Saviour in the place of others were just. How could it be consistent with the righteousness of God to give his Son to suffer at all; and especially in a manner so shameful and cruel, when he was purely innocent? This is a question which none would have been able to answer, had not the Sufferer told us that he did it of his own accord; that his life was not taken from him against his own will, but that he laid it down of himself. "I have power," he says, "to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." A man of wealth may volunteer to take from

prison a penniless neighbour who has been confined there for debt. At the same time, he answers another question, which is as often asked as the former. For what sort of persons, or for how many, did he give his life? Just as great a number, the passage tells us, as believe on him. They are not taken from any particular class in society, nor condition, nor age, but all are saved who have a certain qualification called faith, of which I have already spoken briefly, but which I purpose to explain more fully in my next chapter, where I will endeavour to show in what way it saves from perishing.

## CHAPTER IV.

MANY persons believe in what they read of Christ, just as they do the account of Pontius Pilate, of Herod, and of Judas Iscariot; or as they believe the history of Paul, of Richard Baxter, or Robert Raikes. They do not doubt that it is all true, because the facts are mentioned in credible history. But they do not feel that they have any more concern with these men than if they had never lived. Or they believe in Christ just as ignorant people believe in the worth of learning, which they never try to get; or

as sick people believe in their need of a physician that they never send for.

But the faith in Christ, by which we are saved, is always attended not only with love, but with a desire to be like him, and to keep his commandments. It makes us sorry for, and careful to avoid, every thing that displeases him. It gives a person such an opinion of himself, of his danger and his guilt; and such a sense of his helplessness, that he has no hope of escape from perishing but by him. He depends on Christ to keep his soul from perdition just as much as Simon Peter did to save him from going to the bottom of the lake Gennesaret.

In a town of Germany, called Säalfeldt, many persons used to be em-

ployed in working mines. This led them to dig deep holes or shafts, as they are called, for the purpose of raising the ore; and some of them went so far into the earth that a rope as long as the tallest steeple would not reach to the bottom. When all the ore had been taken out of a mine they sometimes covered the mouth of the shaft with planks, and houses were built over them. One of these shafts was in the cellar of a house in which lived a widow with her daughter, a child about seven years old.

One summer day the mother sent the little girl to bring something out of the cellar, but just as she was taking it into her hand, the plank laid over the hole, on which she was standing, gave way, and with a scream

she sank into the pit. Her mother hearing, as she thought, the shriek of her child, took a candle, and went at once into the cellar. Finding the mouth of the hole uncovered, but her child not there, she was so agitated that her whole body trembled, and she was near falling into the pit after her child. Half distracted as she was, however, she ran out from her house and called together her neighbours. They came and looked into the dark shaft, but knew not what they could do to help her.

But while all were standing around in a state of deep distress, a voice was heard calling out from the darkness below.

“ Oh ! help me ! help me out, quick ! quick !”

A hook on one side of the shaft, to which in former days a ladder had been fixed, had caught her sash while she was falling, and by this the little girl was hanging. But how to reach and save her from perishing in the fearful pit, no one could contrive.

At last there came to the place an old man who, without promising to save the child, determined to try. He began by digging carefully at the mouth of the hole in order to make it wider. After this, he brought a miner's windlass and bucket, and although he said very little, it was seen that he was praying to himself. So soon as all things were ready, he got into the bucket with a miner's lamp and told them to let him down slowly and with great care.

The child saw the light drawing near her. She lifted up her little hands, and at the same time a jug which she had got in the cellar, fell out of them, descending from rock to rock into the depth below. Those who stood at the mouth of the pit were full of fear, but spoke not a word.

The old miner was soon so near the child that she could see him. He spoke to her, tried to cheer her, told her to keep herself quite still, for with the help of God he hoped to save her life. But now the hole became more and more narrow, and the old man was afraid that he would not be able to pass the child without brushing against her, and perhaps, casting her into the deep pit below, so to be dashed upon the rocks. The

danger was so great that he gave a sign to those above not to let him further down.

He then let down a rope with a noose at the end, through which she put her head and arms, and was soon lifted up a little. Raising her very gently, she was at length able to touch the bucket with one hand, and then with the other, although she could not get in it. At that moment the hook by which she had so long hung gave way, and fell into the pit. But the old man was enabled to keep fast hold of the rope, until he had lifted her into the bucket with himself, when he called out to the people above—

“Thank God with me, I have got the child!”

Had the hook been torn from the



THE SAVED CHILD.

p. 66.



wall but one moment before, the child would surely have been lost. But that was prevented by God's goodness, and this beloved daughter was preserved to her widowed mother, to be the more dear to her now, as one that had been restored to her alive from the grave. When I first read this thrilling story, it seemed to me scarcely less wonderful in its incidents, than instructive in its lessons. And were an artist to sketch them with a pencil, I would write beneath the picture the words of the evangelist, in John iii. 16, which it is so well suited to bring to our remembrance and illustrate. Like this little child, the whole of our race are in the greatest possible peril of sinking into a pit—but not one in the earth, in

which we should suffer the loss only of our lives. The dreadful pit over which we are suspended is bottomless, in which we are in danger of perishing, both body and soul, for ever. The hook on which she was supported, may remind us of the providence of God, that keeps us alive in the midst of so many dangers and so much frailty. The kind service of this pious old man, with his windlass, rope, and bucket, may make us think of the means of grace, which are to be used with earnestness and prayer; while her grasping of the rope is to teach the meaning and operation of faith. It is such a seizing of Christ with the affections of our hearts, such a confidence in his willingness and ability to save, and such

a despair of being saved in any other way, as this little child manifested when she cried, "Help! oh, help!" or when she laid hold of the cord let down from the bucket, as the only way of escape from perishing in the awful depth below.

But although I have only begun to tell you of the interesting truths which are taught in this passage, I must not take the time to mention any more, but pass on to the most important part of my work, which is to show my young readers how very important these words of Christ's are to them.

## CHAPTER V.

DOUBTLESS many of you are children of pious parents. In a little while they will be called out of the world by death; and while you are following their dust to the grave, with weeping eyes and breaking hearts, their happy spirits will be with that blessed Redeemer by whom they were saved from perishing. But what will become of you, who are soon to be laid in the grave yourselves, but are unprepared to enter that holy, happy place, which is open only to believers? The thought of parting from parents

at death, often gives you the deepest sorrow ; but what if this separation should be for ever ? What if some of you should continue to disregard their affectionate counsels, disobey their commands, choose the company, and follow the example of those wicked children who break the Sabbath day, use profane words, and tell lies ? Or if you even go to the Sabbath-school and the church, yet pay no attention to what you hear, and are worse, a great deal, perhaps, than many children who have no religious instruction at all. I know that you all expect to go to heaven, at last, although you are not prepared for it now. But you intend and expect to become pious when you grow to be men and women, or when you get sick or old.

My dear young friends, if you could look into the world of despair, how many youth would you see who have perished, because they felt as you feel, and did precisely as you are doing now! They *meant* to be saved, and follow their godly parents and friends to heaven, but they put off the preparation too long. An early and unexpected death cut them down, and they were lost. Some of them were killed by what are called accidents; they were shot by mistake, run over by a horse, or railroad car, were poisoned, drowned, fell out of a window, or were carried off by some disease, and were lost for ever. I beseech you, then, my beloved reader, to take warning from them.

Remember your Creator in the days of your youth. Call on the Saviour

for help, as earnestly as the little girl of whom I have spoken, did to her friends. You will then surely find his hand stretched out to save you. But if you feel such great fear, when you think of your danger of perishing, how grateful should you be when your mind turns to the love of Christ, who takes this fear away! And is it not wonderful, that when we can be so thankful for the little favours that our parents, friends, and neighbours sometimes do us, we can think of and feel so little our obligations to Christ?

Many years ago, when most of our Western States were a mere wilderness, and held by the Indians, a Frenchman fell into their hands, whom, for some reason that I do not recollect, they resolved to burn.

Having made the usual preparation of pitch, faggots, and larger wood, they tied him to a tree, and were about to apply the fire, when a white man to whom the Indians were very friendly, came near. Perceiving what they were about to do, he entreated them to stop, and spare the poor man's life. To this they consented, for a certain present, in the form of a ransom. The joy of the rescued man was inexpressible, and although he never thought of the providence of God in sending the man to rescue him from this cruel death, he did not forget the friend that saved him. They both lived many years after this, and were settled in places very far apart. The Frenchman's home was in Canada, and his deliverer's in a distant part

of the United States, yet his kindness was never forgotten. Every year, it is said, this grateful man was accustomed to visit his benefactor, always taking some present as a visible token of his gratitude to one who had been the instrument of saving his life.

Such a sense of temporal favours is very pleasing, and shows an affectionate, generous, and noble heart. But how mournful is it that a man possessed of so many excellent qualities, who made so just an estimate of the value of his life, and of the kindness of his preserver, should have thought so little, or not at all, of the Redeemer of his soul. But the world abounds in examples of such inconsistency and folly, which both illustrate and impress the Saviour's solemn declara-

tion that, "the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." We see it among the most refined and enlightened, the learned and honoured, as well as among the ignorant and despised, the things most sought and cared for, are those which are seen and temporal, while few can be allured or urged to seek those which are not seen and eternal.

When the armies of Prussia, Austria, and Russia were engaged with the armies of France under Napoleon, the three kings were posted upon a height about two miles distant from the battle, out of danger, but in sight of its progress. Their anxiety, mingled with fear, was almost too great to be endured, but the vic-

tory at last was on the side of their arms, though the dust and smoke of the fight made it impossible for them to see it. But when a messenger, galloping with full speed to the top of the hill, announced the result, the Emperor of Austria burst into tears, then immediately getting off from his horse, he put his hat and sword upon the ground, fell on his knees, and with a loud voice returned thanks to God. The kings of Prussia and Russia followed his example. At the same instant, several officers in attendance, and the whole guard, all kneeled, and for several minutes remained in perfect silence, as if in the act of secret thanksgiving. Then followed a shout of more than a hundred grateful voices, "The Lord is with us!"

“The Lord is with us!” These illustrious men could acknowledge the mercy of God in saving their honour and their thrones, but what was such a deliverance, however great, compared with that which the “wise and the mighty and the noble” have too generally disregarded—the amazing salvation of the gospel? And how surprising that any one can read of the love of Christ for us, without sincerely loving him! The only wonder is, that they who hope in his salvation can think of anything else.

History tells us that Cyrus, in one of his wars, made a captive of the young prince of Armenia, with his beautiful and blooming wife whom he had just married. When they were both brought before him, Cyrus asked

the prince what he would give to be set at liberty, and be restored to his kingdom.

“As to my own liberty and my crown,” said he, with great apparent indifference, “I care but very little. But if Cyrus would be pleased to give my beloved princess her liberty and her hereditary possessions, I would exceedingly rejoice.” And then, with great tenderness of manner and sincerity, he added, “For her, I would be willing to give my life.”

The answer greatly pleased Cyrus, who at once bestowed freedom, not upon these royal captives only, but on all the Armenian prisoners; and by this act of generosity caused emotions of joy in their bosoms that they wanted words to express. Some

praised his personal beauty, some his courage and military talents, others his humanity and kindness of heart.

“And you,” said the prince, addressing himself to his bride, “what did you think of him?”

“What did I think?” said she; “I have not thought of him at all. I did not even look at him.”

“Is this possible?” said he, “and pray where were your eyes and your attention directed?”

“They were fixed on that dear and generous man who said he cared little for his own liberty, or life, but would cheerfully sacrifice both for the sake of procuring mine.”

That was an answer worthy of a princess, and which clearly showed that admiring husband, that every

tender and affectionate sentiment of his heart was understood and answered by hers.

What then should be the feelings of our hearts towards that Friend who not only offered his life, but gave it up a cheerful sacrifice, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life?"

Did we realize the half of what we owe to him, would not every earthly object of affection disappear and become invisible, as did the personal attractions and regal honours of Cyrus to the captive Armenian queen?

Should we not exclaim with all the devotion of Asaph, "Whom have we in heaven but thee, and there is none upon earth that we desire besides thee?"

Let children bless the Saviour's name,  
And sing his wondrous grace ;  
Who from the realms of glory came,  
To save our sinful race.

Though he was rich, in heaven above,  
From all eternity ;  
He left his greatness out of love  
For sinners such as we.

The poorest child is scarce so poor  
As Jesus Christ became ;  
When, our salvation to procure,  
He bore our sin and shame.

A manger, for his cradle bed,  
Received him at his birth ;  
He had not where to lay his head,  
Though Lord of heaven and earth.

Lord Jesus ! while we sing thy grace,  
We love thee and adore ;  
But when in heaven we see thy face,  
Our souls shall love thee more.

## LITTLE ELEANOR.

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I CANNOT impress the foregoing remarks on the nature of faith better than by giving my young readers an illustration of its power in the case of a very dear child of one of my friends, from whose lips I received it. The venerable parent has "entered into his rest," since he gave me the affecting account, and has doubtless found, in some mansion of his "Father's house," the beloved spirit whose early removal was so afflictive.

It was in a pleasant village on the Hudson, in the State of New York, where the father was pastor of a large and prosperous congregation, that little Eleanor, this child of early grace, was born. So soon as she was old enough to speak intelligibly, she was sent to school for three months, when she made only so much progress as to be able to spell words of two letters. An attack of disease at this time made it necessary to take her from the school; and so serious and prolonged was her illness, that she was kept at home nine months. After a few weeks, however, she had so far recovered as to be able to sit up in bed, and amuse herself with the toys, and especially the little books with which she was abundantly supplied

by many kind friends. One day, when sitting with one of them in her hand, on which her eyes were intently fixed, it was observed that her countenance was lighted up with an expression of great pleasure, which was shortly followed by a hearty laugh.

“What do you find in your book,” said her mother, “which is so amusing?”

“Why, I was laughing at this story?”

“But you cannot read,” replied her mother.

“Indeed I can,” said she, and immediately proved it by reading, from “Nursery Rhymes,” the story of the “Cowardly Boy,” without hesitation or mistake, to the end, while every one present listened with amazement.

It was the first time that her parents or friends knew that she had made any progress since she had left her school. No one had taught her, nor had she asked assistance; but her active and inquisitive mind had advanced, without an instructor, from the first step above the alphabet, to the reading of large and useful books. On going back to school, she was very studious, and made so great proficiency, as to be the subject of common remark. But of all the days in the week, none was so delightful to her as the Sabbath, and no lessons were studied more faithfully than were her preparations to meet her teacher in the Sabbath-school.

On New Year's day she received a Bible, which was read through in four

months, and then put into the library of the school; for much as she valued it as a present, she gave it away, in order that it might be used for the benefit of others. She was accustomed to commit to memory a verse every morning before breakfast, and was so fond of the Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, that she learned the first four books so accurately, that, had they been lost, she could have repeated every verse, not the meaning only, but the words, to any one who had wished to print them. It was not known to her parents when her heart was renewed by the Spirit, for, like little Samuel, she seemed to be sanctified from her birth. It could never be recollected when she was not lovely in her disposition, obedient

and conscientious. So soon as she could read, she manifested a preference for books that were useful and good, and especially for hymns and narratives that related to the Saviour. Her conversation, and use of what she read, gave evidence that the books were understood, and were often made profitable to others, as well as to herself.

A poor old woman in the village, who was blind and supported by charity, was an object of Eleanor's special attention. Long before it was known to others, she had been in the habit of visiting, and reading the Scriptures, and other religious books, to this afflicted servant of Christ, who was greatly edified as well as entertained by the visits of her little friend

and comforter. For an aged man who sat near her in the church on the Sabbath, but was too deaf to hear the preacher, she was accustomed to find the chapter that was read, the hymns and the text; which led him to say after her death, that "if Eleanor had been eyes to poor Aunt Peggy, she had been ears to him." Her great humility was shown in her unwillingness to have her acts of kindness and piety known. Not even her parents nor any of the family were made acquainted, till after her death, with much that she did for the relief of the poor, and instruction of the ignorant. In her visits to the sick she would sometimes exhort them with the utmost tenderness and anxiety; quoting and applying the Scriptures with sur-

prising propriety, so that one of her grateful beneficiaries used to say that “Eleanor was her little doctor and minister too.” A striking trait in her character was love for the truth. Nothing could tempt her to prevaricate or deceive, no matter what the consequences to herself or to others.

But in the midst of all these serious labours for the welfare of the ignorant, sick, and afflicted, Eleanor preserved the simplicity and mirthful air of a child. She was cheerful without levity, and could entertain with her playful and often witty conversation, without impairing, in the smallest degree, the confidence of any in her ardent piety. Her sense of what was absurd and ridiculous in others, was remarkably quick and discriminat-

ing, and yet, so perfect was her self-control, that she was never known to give pain by her severe remarks on their follies, however strong the temptation; and hence her capacity for retort and sarcasm was scarcely known, as it was kept under such constant and complete restraint. Such was the active and useful life of this youthful believer, until her labours of piety were arrested by disease in her tenth year. The fever, with which she was laid upon her bed, was not so severe at first, as to cause any serious fears about its result. Her mind was not affected, and she could receive and send messages of love, and express in various ways, her interest in the objects that had engaged her attention while she was in health.

She manifested no anxiety about the result of her sickness, though it was inferred from some of her remarks and arrangements that she did not expect to recover. Thus, on one occasion, during a remission of her fever, she requested that all her tracts and books should be brought to her, when she gave directions to have them distributed in such ways as she supposed would make them most useful. Some were sent to persons for their own benefit, but most were put into the library of the Sabbath-school. This little service she performed with great self-possession, and, as was supposed, under an impression that she had for ever done with them herself. In this way, she desired to bequeath her little treasures, as she was leav-

ing the world, in order that they might do good when she was gone.

In all her sickness she was patient and resigned, willing to live, if it should please God to restore her, and willing to die if it did not. Her heart was full of love to all around her, as well as to her Saviour, whose name and praises were often on her lips, repeated in her conversation, and sung in her hymns. Her inquiries and remarks were as edifying as they were affecting; and always evinced that her mind was occupied with meditations upon “things above.”

Much of her time was spent in prayer, which, though offered up in silence, was accompanied sometimes with audible expressions of gratitude and thanksgiving to her “precious

Saviour," and acknowledgments of her obligations to his "unspeakable grace." Towards the close of her sickness she had seasons of occasional delirium, when her expressions, though incoherent, all referred to the same subject, and showed that "Christ and his cross were all her theme." Nothing was omitted which a skilful physician and kind friends could do to restore her to health: but in spite of all their efforts, her malady gradually advanced till the close of the third week after her attack, when, without a single fear or doubt, she fell asleep.

Such, dear children, is an inadequate sketch of the character, exercises, life, and death of a beloved child, many of whose relatives still

survive, and who retain all the circumstances, and more than I have written, in fresh remembrance. May such an exemplification of the power of faith on the heart of one so youthful be instructive to all who read it, especially to you, my young friends, to whom, though dead, she yet speaks with peculiar power and tenderness. Let it constrain you to look, without delay, to him whom the brazen image typified, and who is peculiarly near to them who seek him early. Yes,

“ To him at once, dear children, come,  
For he hath said you may,  
His bosom then shall be your home,—  
Your tears he'll wipe away,

“ For all who early seek his face  
Shall surely taste his love;  
Jesus shall guide them by his grace  
To dwell with him above.”

## THE BASKET BOY.

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I HAD intended to close my little book with the example of Eleanor; but her instructive story has brought to my mind another, which will not less affect the hearts of my youthful readers, I think, than it has my own.

“Do you see that house?” said a friend with whom I was walking, some time ago, in a city of New England. He was pointing to a poor building in an obscure street, that was evidently inhabited by persons

in the humblest condition of life. "There is now just breathing his last, under that roof," said he, "one of the most afflicted men I have ever known. A few years ago, he was one of our wealthiest citizens, and had a large and lovely family, all of whom have died but his broken-hearted wife. A succession of calamities, which no human prudence could prevent, has stripped him of his large estate; and he is dying, without property enough to pay the expenses of his funeral. He has many friends who remember his prosperous days, when he was in circumstances so much better than their own, and who have contributed some things, in a delicate way, to his support, during his prolonged sickness; but his chief dependence was

upon his only surviving child, a most affectionate and pious little son, not twelve years old, until within a short time, when this darling boy was also taken away by death. Though too young to understand and appreciate fully the trials of his beloved parents, yet he often noticed the sadness of their countenances, and their frequent tears. Supposing that their chief distress proceeded from their poverty and unsupplied wants, 'Never mind, father,' said he, as one day he was sitting at his bedside, 'never mind, I will take care of you.' Ah, little does the dear child know the source or the depths of our sorrow, thought the father, or his inability to bring relief. But it was not an exclamation of childish feeling, which was forgotten

as soon as he had given it utterance. He really believed he could earn the means of their support, and he resolved to try. Through the kindness of his friends, he had occasionally received small sums of money to be expended for himself. These he had laid by, it seems, for a better purpose; and they now furnished him a little capital for his proposed business as a peddler. Without asking counsel of any one, he resolved to invest it in useful articles, and go about the city to sell them. Such employment was not in good repute, on account of the many idle and vicious boys who dealt in toys and worthless books, which the moral and pious did not wish to buy. But while the baskets of others were filled with

trash, little Charles determined to try to counteract their mischief by selling things that would be useful. But his great desire was, to connect this labour for the welfare of others, with the relief of his afflicted parents. To those who knew their condition and the motives of their child, it was affecting to witness the cheerfulness and perseverance with which he prosecuted his fatiguing work ; with what modesty he made the offer of his goods ; and the patience and meekness with which he submitted to the rebuffs and sneers of the unfeeling. By most, however, he was treated with kindness, as it afforded them a convenient opportunity of rendering assistance, without seeming to give it in the form of charity. But much as

these gleanings of their child were needed, and greatly as the hearts of the parents were comforted by such a token of affection, yet the very thoughts of it were often too painful to be endured. Again and again they would have interposed their authority or their entreaties, and caused him to stop, preferring the alternative of extreme want, or public alms, to relief obtained in such a way. But little did they imagine how soon their affectionate benefactor was to be arrested in his work by Providence. Their humble residence was near the river, in which were often floating fragments of timber, logs, boards, &c., which Charles would intercept, and pull to the shore for fuel, and often at no little hazard of his life. One

day observing a large log floating down the river, he resolved to secure it by means of a very long pole. The prize was almost obtained, and he thought it in his power, when reaching a little too far, he lost his balance and fell into the stream. Every effort was made to rescue him, but in vain. He sank to the bottom as if he had been lead, and was not found until his life had departed ; and all that was taken home to these broken-hearted parents was his corpse. It would seem that their cup of sorrow had been full before. Every other child had been taken from them. They had been stripped of property. The father was sinking rapidly under an incurable disease, and now by a sudden and unlooked

for calamity, they are deprived of this most useful and interesting as well as only child. Nothing could be more mysterious than this event to all who knew it, and the sorrow it produced extended far beyond the circle of those who were particularly bereaved. It was scarcely credible that the father, so reduced by disease, could survive the shock, but the gracious hand that had smitten was now extended to uphold and support. The sudden and premature removal of this almost idolized child, was instrumental, it is hoped, in preparing the parents to follow him. It was not long before the father's sufferings ceased on earth, and his spirit went, I trust, to the society of the 'just made perfect,' which his beloved

child had entered a few months before him."

Such is the account given me of this interesting child, and though it makes one sad to read its distressing termination, yet the incidents of his short life furnish much for parents as well as children to reflect upon with profit. There is not less to be learned from the various afflictions and submission of the parents, than from the pious conduct of their son. What an affecting illustration of the uncertainty of wealth, and of the ease with which it often escapes out of the hand even of the economical and diligent, who are active in the use of all judicious means to preserve it! We see that in spite of all that we can do to keep our riches, they "will make

themselves wings and fly away as an eagle towards heaven." A person in England, who had a sum of money left him to distribute in charity, had applications made for a share of it from no less than thirty persons who had ridden in their own coaches. How surprising that any should be anxious to obtain what is so easily lost, and which, if kept, is the source of so many temptations !

The case of this afflicted family will suggest to many the same thoughts that troubled the mind of Asaph. The inequality in the condition of men, and especially the trials of the pious, almost made him doubt the equity of God's government, or whether there was any government over men at all. "I was envious at

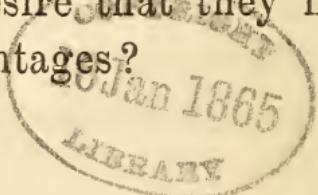
the foolish," he says, "when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They are not in trouble, as other men, neither are they plagued like other men." Nor did he find relief till he was taught, from the sanctuary, to look beyond the present life to the future, when the ways of God, so mysterious now, shall be explained. It doubtless appeared unaccountable to others, and perhaps to the parents themselves, that their lot in life should have been so severe, but the reasons were all disclosed so soon as they entered the light of eternity.

And what a beautiful pattern of filial piety is this lovely child! How touching his juvenile efforts to comfort his father, and wipe away his tears! "Never mind," said he, "I

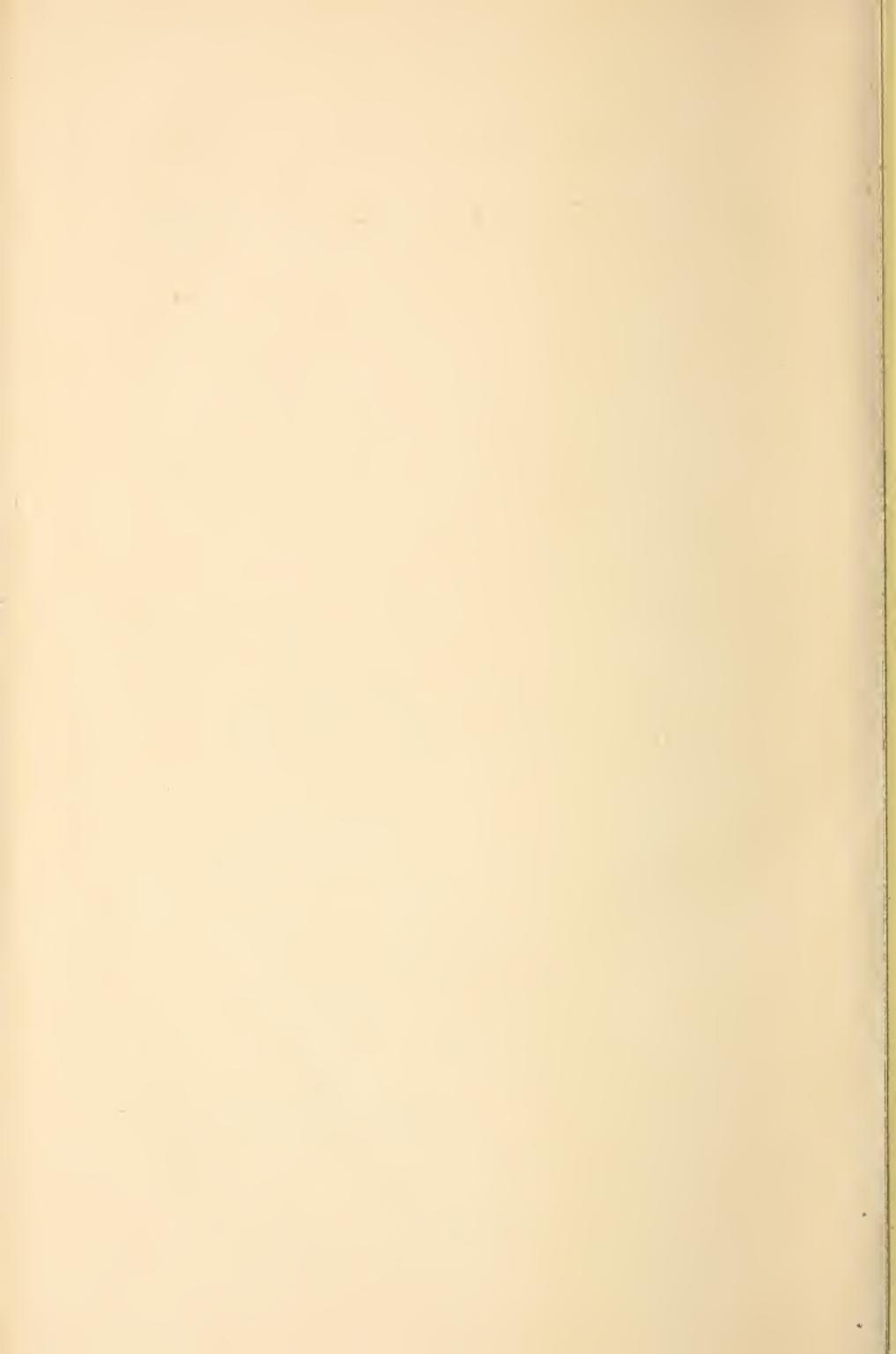
will take care of you." How unlike the conduct of those heartless and undutiful children who forsake their parents in the time of trouble, and feel no sympathy in their sorrows ! who are ashamed of their poverty, and mortified by their plainer dress than that of other children, and seek the company of the vicious and rude ! It is a sad mistake to suppose that any are disparaged by the wise and good merely because they are poor. None who knew the parents of this little basket boy loved or respected him less on account of the reverses of his family. Indeed they honoured him the more for his independence, and disregard of the opinion of the proud, by betaking himself to such an humble employment in the city of his

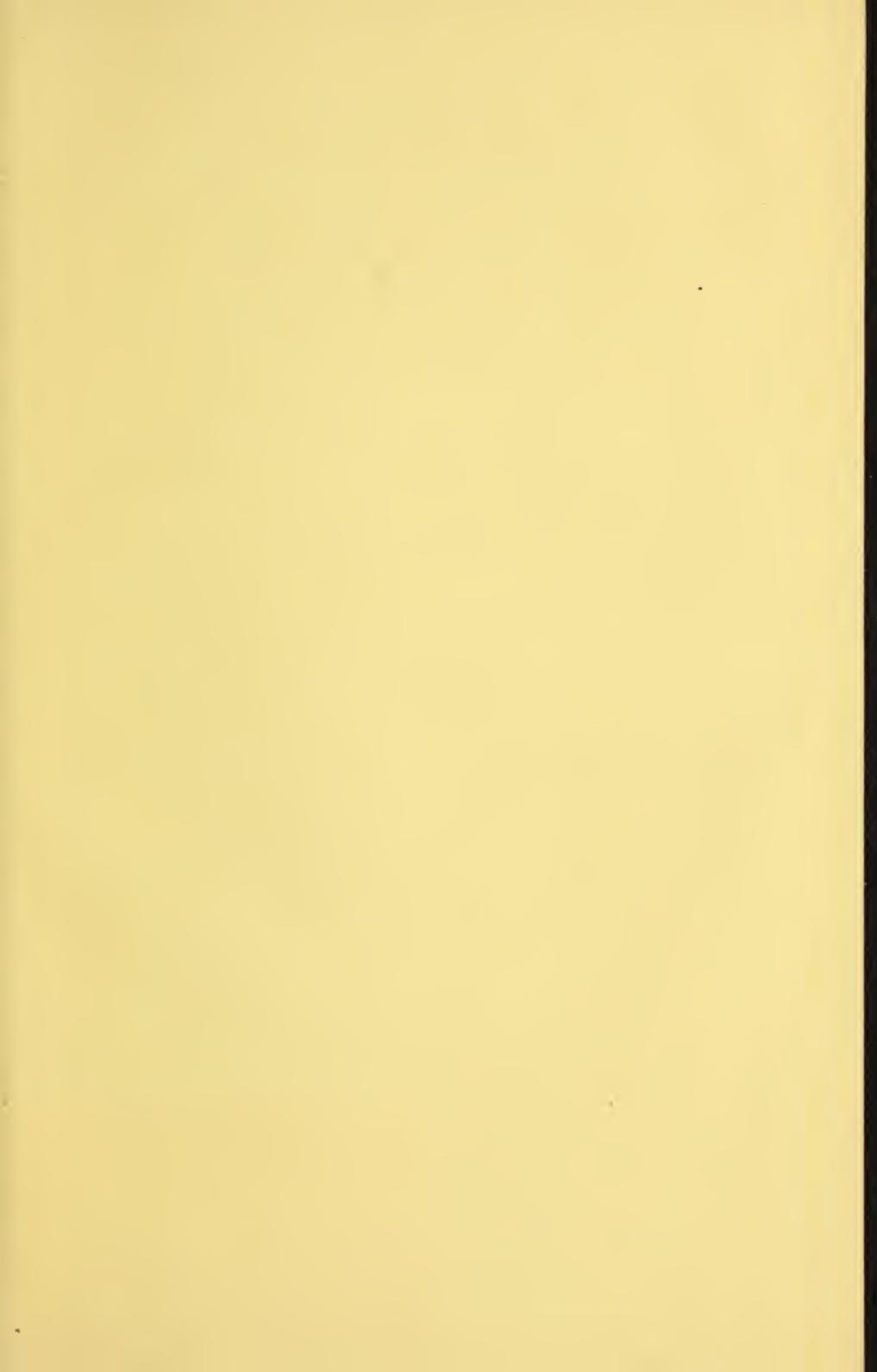
birth, and among his acquaintances. It was an instructive, as well as affecting spectacle, to see him offering his little stock of wares at the doors of the wealthy, among whom his father once had a position as an equal. And when the business of this young hawker was ended in this sudden and distressing manner, the common sorrow of the people evinced how much they respected, as well as loved him.

Such was the short life of this interesting child, and so early and unlooked-for was his death. And can any of the youthful readers of his story notice the delightful influence of early piety as exhibited in him, and not desire that they may share in its advantages?









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